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Интернационализация высшего образования в России: социокультурное взаимодействие студентов из стран БРИКС (Россия, Китай)

Российское образовательное пространство вузов характеризуется социокультурным взаимодействием в смешанных группах (в которых учатся студенты из разных стран мира). Социокультурное взаимодействие создает условия для формирования таких компетенций, как толерантность, навык работы с представителями иных стран и культур.

В исследовании приняли участие студенты из России и из Китая, обучающиеся в вузах Екатеринбурга (N=1000 студентов) и эксперты в области образования России и Китая (N=20). Для интерпретации данных исследования использовались следующие методы: сравнительный и уровневый анализ результатов исследования; статистические методы: метод описательной статистики, метод парных распределений, шкала Лайкерта, t-критерий Стьюдента.

Результаты исследования позволили выявить различия в культуре студентов, основные моменты, затрудняющие повседневное взаимодействие в рамках одного образовательного пространства российского вуза: недостаточное знание социальных нормативно-этических установок новой социальной и культурной среды; несоответствие в некоторых культурных ценностях; проблемы понимания и неоднозначности расшифровки русской речи.

Выявлена закономерность, демонстрирующая процесс инкультурации китайских студентов в процессе обучения в социокультурных условиях российских вузов. Так с момента поступления до момента выпуска происходит повышение показателей социокультурного взаимодействия китайских студентов: информационно-аналитическая составляющая (от M = 27,7 до M = 31,8), мотивационно-оценочная составляющая (от M = 27,6 до M = 32,3), коммуникативная составляющая (от M = 25,2 до M = 31,6), деятельностная составляющая (от M = 24,2 до M = 32,1).

Но для достижения высоких показателей необходимо уделять внимания процессам оптимизации через совместные российско-китайские мероприятия по организации досуга и отдыха, совместные общественные студенческие объединения, экскурсионные программы, направленные на знакомство с культурой принимающей страны, совместном взаимодействии российских и китайских студентов в социальных сетях и мессенджерах.

Ключевые слова: интернационализация высшего образования, российские вузы, социокультурное взаимодействие, страны БРИКС, студенты из Китая

Ссылка для цитирования:

Новгородцева А. Н., Беляева Е. А. Интернационализация высшего образования в России: социокультурное взаимодействие студентов из стран БРИКС (Россия, Китай) // Перспективы науки и образования. 2020. № 3 (45). С. 517-526. doi: 10.32744/pse.2020.3.37



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Internationalization of higher education in Russia: sociocultural interaction of students from the BRICS countries (Russia, China)

Russian educational space of universities is characterized by sociocultural interaction in mixed groups (in which students from around the world study). Sociocultural interaction creates the conditions for the formation of such competencies as tolerance, the ability to work in representatives of other countries and cultures.

The study involved students from Russia and China, studying at universities in Yekaterinburg (N = 1000 students) and experts in the field of education in Russia and China (N = 20). The following methods were used for interpreting the research data: comparative and level analysis of the research results; statistical methods: descriptive statistics method, pair distribution method, Likert scale, student t-test.

The results of the study made it possible to identify differences in the students' culture, the main points that impede everyday interaction within the same educational space of a Russian university: insufficient knowledge of the socially normative and ethical principles of the new social and cultural environment; inconsistency in some cultural values; problems of understanding and ambiguity of decoding of Russian speech.

A regularity is revealed that demonstrates the process of inculturation of Chinese students in the learning process in the sociocultural conditions of Russian universities. So from the moment of admission to the moment of graduation, there is an increase in the indicators of sociocultural interaction of Chinese students: the information-analytical component (from M = 27.7 to M = 31.8), the motivational-evaluative component (from M = 27.6 to M = 32.3), the communicative component (from M = 25.2 to M = 31.6), the activity component (from M = 24.2 to M = 32.1).

However, in order to achieve high indicators, it is necessary to pay attention to optimization processes through joint Russian-Chinese events for organizing leisure and recreation, joint public student associations, excursion programs aimed at acquaintance with the culture of the host country, the mutual interaction of Russian and Chinese students in social networks and instant messengers.

Key words: internationalization of higher education, Russian universities, sociocultural interaction, BRICS countries, students from China

For Reference:

Novgorodtseva, A. N., & Belyaeva, E. A. (2020). Internationalization of higher education in Russia: sociocultural interaction of students from the BRICS countries (Russia, China). *Perspektivy nauki i obrazovaniya – Perspectives of Science and Education*, 45 (3), 517-526. doi: 10.32744/pse.2020.3.37

Introduction

The internationalization of education in the context of competition among universities in the global market for educational services is a process that affects all countries of the world. The internationalization of education is one of the criteria for determining the position of a university (and science) in world rankings. It assumes the successful interaction of different cultures in a single educational process. This process can be investigated, at least based on four approaches. The first is an activity-based approach, involving the study of the number of international students, the focus and intensity of mobility, the presence of networked educational programs, and dual-degree programs. The second is a competency-based approach. The competency-based approach, on the one hand, allows the analysis of knowledge, skills acquired in a mixed group, in which students from around the world go through the learning process.

On the other hand, within the framework of the competency-based approach, it is possible to study the relations, values of students, and the mutual influence of cultures. The third is a rationalistic approach, which involves an analysis of the results achieved, which are spelt out and implemented by managerial measures on the part of state bodies. In particular, in Russia, this is a "5-100 project". The fourth approach is a process approach; it considers the nature of the integration of international aspects into the teaching, scientific and service function of an educational institution [1].

As part of this work, the emphasis is on competency-based and process-based approaches. The choice of approaches is due to the need to understand how internationalization affects the daily interaction of students from different cultures. The object of this work is students from Russia and China, studying in the Russian educational space.

The cultural ties development and cooperation between Russia and China in the educational field is correlated with the modern strategy of internationalization of Russian universities. Many Russian universities today seek to develop partnerships with Chinese universities. In particular, many Chinese students studying in Russian universities is continually increasing. Academic exchange programs are being successfully implemented, and the number of scientific contacts between representatives of the universities of the two countries is growing. The implementation of such cooperation is accompanied by issues of sociocultural interaction in the field of education of Russian and Chinese students. The works of Russian and foreign researchers consider a large number of problem areas of interaction between Russian and Chinese students, such as adaptation, communication barriers, the inconsistency of the educational systems of the two countries. This article discusses the axiological features of Russian and Chinese students, which are the basis for building a sociocultural dialogue.

Many Russian and foreign studies of a social and humanitarian nature are devoted to studying the problems of Russian-Chinese interaction. Feng Yujun examines the sociocultural interaction of the two countries through the characteristics of different political regimes at different periods [2]. The problem of emigration is raised in the work of A.G. Larina, who explores the Chinese diasporas in different historical periods [3]. Qin Ming formulates the features of social and cultural exchange between China and Russia: the constant expansion of the sphere of humanitarian cooperation, as well as the dominance of the state model in determining the specifics of social and cultural exchanges [4]. In their studies, Jiang Weixing

[5] and Geert Hofstede [6] focus on the civilizational similarities of Russians and Chinese, based on the dominance of the collective values of both nations.

Russian Sinologist V.V. Malyavin considers various aspects of the interaction between Russia and China, highlighting the ideological, religious and value components [7]. Works N.V. Varlamova [8], V.V. Kalits, N.V. Vinichuka [9; 10], E.B. Popkova [11], S.Yu. Raspertova [12] are devoted to the issues of inculturation and ideological contradictions. N.A. Grebennikova considered adaptation and socialization as the main problem in the interaction of Russians and Chinese. N.A. Grebennikova defined three stages of intercultural interaction: autonomy, assimilation and integration [13].

Materials and methods

For identifying features and contradictions in the process of internationalization in the Russian educational process of students from China, a study was conducted. Two working methods were applied. First, the methods of theoretical analysis of the literature on the problem. Secondly, empirical research methods. The empirical research strategy is mixed; that is, the study applies both quantitative methods for collecting and analyzing information (survey results) and qualitative methods (interviews with experts).

In 2016-2020, a targeted survey of Chinese (500 people) and Russian (500 people) students studying at four universities in the city of Yekaterinburg was conducted. Fifty experts in the field of educational cooperation between Russia and China were also interviewed. The following methods were used for interpreting the research data: comparative and level analysis of the research results; statistical methods: descriptive statistics method, pair distribution method, Likert scale, Student's t-test.

Literature review

Regardless of how internationalization is evaluated in the context of globalization: a) internationalization as part of globalization; b) as an answer to her challenges; c) as a phenomenon preceding globalization transformations [14], within the framework of universities it is considered by the main participants - students and teachers from two positions. On the one hand, this is a process taking place within the framework of their native culture. However, in mixed groups (from the position of Russian citizens of jointly studying Russians with international students who have a different culture), on the other hand, it is a process of adaptation to a new environment – to the receiving side (from the position of an international student exploring a new sociocultural space) [15].

The internationalization of learning involves adaptation in the work of S.I. Modnova, L.V. Ukhova [16] identified three factors of successful adaptation: sociocultural, socio-communicative, and societal. In socio-communicative adaptation, the role of language is emphasized. Learning a language helps to immerse yourself in culture, history and mentality, which is why the level of knowledge of the language determines not only the ability to study at a university in another country but also the willingness and openness to a new sociocultural environment [17]. In the work of O.I. Danilenko, C. Li, and I. Xu [18] emphasis were shifted to cognitive-behavioural resources of the individual and coping strategies in the analysis of adaptation in mixed sociocultural environments for students in mixed groups. S.V. Dementieva [19] and I.G. Savchenko [20], noting that the perceived level of security

also affects adaptation in the new sociocultural environment. The success of adaptation depends on motivation – further career and professional development in the country of migration, consider A.V. Kravtsov [21] and E.V. Nikitenko [22]. Thus, the process of teaching Chinese students in Russian universities is to build up cultural, academic and social capital, which will allow them having a successful career in the future.

Chinese students as bearers of their culture have a strict system of norms and moral values, the main of which are family, submission to parents, respect for elders, the dominance of other people's needs over their own needs, modesty in presenting their achievements and conformism. The traditional characteristics of the people of China are collectivism, patriotism, patience, respect for elders. Moreover, as N.V. Varlamova, S.A. Rykova, I. E. Kirisheva note that the residents of the Chinese are characterized by excessive pragmatism and the desire to maintain a “face,” that is, they strive to show socially approved emotions in a conflict situation. One of the hallmarks of the Chinese is their persistence, which is manifested in the implementation of the strategy of “soft power.” Chinese inherent in such qualities as discipline, stamina, calm. They have a very strongly developed sense of national dignity, a positive ethnic identity, and high self-esteem [8; 23].

However, in our opinion, all these characteristics are constantly changing in the process of globalization and the influence of Western culture, which sets new standards of behaviour and dictates new values that cannot but affect the value orientations and behavioural characteristics of representatives of Chinese youth. At the same time, training in the Russian educational space also develops, changes the value orientations of students from China, it is vital to take into account the social situation of student development [24].

Unlike Chinese culture, Russian society combines various traditions, cultural norms and values due to the multinational composition of the Russian population. The dominance of individualistic values characterizes modern Russian society, in particular, the rigid hierarchical structure of the family and the family identity of the individual is not typical. In Russian culture, which is more individualistic than Chinese, it is not customary to perceive the interests of others above their own interests. In the Chinese mentality, avoiding conflict and maintaining harmony in interpersonal relationships are mandatory. In Russian culture, it is customary to express thoughts directly, which may seem like a manifestation of insufficient politeness when communicating with foreigners [8].

Results

The study analyzed the terminal values of Russian and Chinese university students in Yekaterinburg. This analysis made it possible to identify similarities and differences between them. The data presented show that the final values of students from the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China have both common and different features (Table 1). The leading position among the values of both groups of students belongs to both social and individualistic values of friendship (the first rank for Russian students and second rank for Chinese students), personal security (fourth rank for Russian students and first rank for Chinese students), freedom (5 rank for Russian students and forth rank for Chinese students) and family (second rank for Russian students and third rank for Chinese students). The final position in the hierarchy of values in both groups belongs to social status, pleasure and religion/faith (13th and 12th ranks). Thus, the values of young people from Russia and China are mostly similar because of their age and shared interests.

Table 1**Terminal Values of Russian and Chinese Students**

№	Values	Russian students		Chinese students	
		Average points	Rank	Average points	Rank
1	Friendship	4.1	1	3.7	2
2	Personal safety	6.3	4	3.3	1
3	Work	6.9	6	5.2	8
4	Education	7.1	7	4.9	5
5	Wealth	7.9	10	5.7	9
6	Freedom	6.3	5	4.8	4
7	Love	5.5	3	5.8	10
8	Social status	8.7	12	5.9	11
9	Patriotism	7.6	9	5.1	7
10	Recognition	7.2	8	5.0	6
11	Family	4.8	2	4.0	3
12	Pleasures	8.6	11	8.1	13
13	Religion	9.0	13	7.6	12

Comment: the importance of values for students is rated on a 13-point scale, where 1 is the most significant value and 13 the most insignificant.

One of the key reasons for the problems of sociocultural interaction between students from China and Russia is the mismatch between the values of their native and host cultures. However, at least three significant differences can be distinguished:

1. Russian students rate personal security below, leaving it in fourth place, and Chinese students in the first place.
2. Love is more valuable for Russian students – in third place, and tenth – in Chinese. It should be noted here that in the Chinese tradition, "love" is not considered as a prerequisite for family and close relations between people.
3. Education for Chinese students is essential – it is in fifth place, and for Russians – only in seventh.

The results show that for Russian students, the values of a hedonistic nature – love and pleasure – are more important than for Chinese students. At the same time, for the latter, education and personal security are more valuable. Moreover, this value is consistent with arriving in Russia and with the conditions of stay in the territory of a foreign state. Nevertheless, the values of students from the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China are radically different and may interfere with productive sociocultural interaction between them. On the contrary, the value of such values as personal security, friendship and family for both groups of students can become the basis for the development of various associations associated with these common points. Also, the great importance of such values as world peace and love of the country for Chinese students can become the basis for attracting them to participate in the activities of patriotic and cultural student associations already existing in Ural universities, and community groups. In general, many existing student associations emphasize the idea of diversity as a value, where, in addition to representatives of other cultures, representatives with disabilities also participate. However, this does not interfere with modern communication, especially given the growth

of media literacy, when gadgets and the Internet allow finding programs – translators and assistants in interaction [25].

Another axiological aspect studied was the individual opinions of Russian and Chinese students about differences in each other's values. The data show that the proportion of students who do not see these differences was only slightly higher among Russian students: 16% versus 11% among Chinese students. The majority of respondents, both on average in the sample and individual groups of respondents, answering the question, noted that it is difficult for them to judge the existence of such differences. At the same time, the respondents' proportion who found it challenging to assess was higher among Chinese students than among Russian students is 56% versus 47%. About a third of respondents said that differences in the values of the Chinese and Russian exist. Many representatives of the two sides of the cultural dialogue see differences in the values of Russians and Chinese, mainly due to different cultures and religions. It is cultural and religious differences that, in essence, lead to all the other differences that the students named to education, politics, to each other, to themselves, to their family and marriage. Therefore, for the successful development of social and cultural interactions, it is essential, first of all, to introduce both sides of the dialogue with the cultural and religious characteristics of other people.

Based on the analysis of theoretical materials and for the subsequent determination of the sociocultural interaction of Russian and Chinese students, four of its components were formulated:

1. The information-analytical component of sociocultural interaction includes knowledge about the culture of one's nation and other cultures, that is, it is necessary to demonstrate knowledge of one's culture and the culture of other peoples, be able to highlight the similarities and differences of native and other cultures;
2. motivational and evaluative component allows identifying the degree of tolerance towards people of another culture;
3. the communicative component determines the skills of intercultural communication;
4. the activity component captures the daily practices of collaborative interaction.

The principal component method was applied. A comparison of two sample populations of Chinese students in the first year of study and the fourth year of study made it possible to establish patterns in the development of all the components of sociocultural interaction that we distinguished in the learning process at a Russian university.

We found that when entering Russian universities, Chinese students are characterized by an average level of an information-analytical component of sociocultural interaction ($M = 27.7$), motivational-evaluative component ($M = 27.6$), communicative component ($M = 25.2$). A low level was revealed in relation to the activity component ($M = 24.2$), which indicates a lack of experience in the joint activities of Chinese and Russian students in the initial stages of training in Russian universities.

At the stage of graduation from universities in Yekaterinburg, a different picture was revealed, demonstrating the process of inculturation of Chinese students in the process of learning in the socio-cultural conditions of Russian universities, their development of competencies of interaction in international groups. Chinese 4th-year students, unlike students of 1-2 years of study, have statistically significant high indicators of components of sociocultural interaction at an average level of development according to a statistical analysis conducted using Student's t-criterion. Thus, we observe higher values of the components of sociocultural interaction, namely, the information-analytical component $M = 31.8$; component of motivation and assessment $M = 32.3$; communicative component $M = 31.6$; activity component $M = 32.1$.

In a group of Chinese 4th-year students, 41% of respondents demonstrated high communication and linguistic abilities in intercultural dialogue, in which they pay attention to personal qualities, rather than to the national identity of the interlocutor. Chinese students at the graduation stage are characterized by high tolerance, high awareness of the similarities and differences of different cultures, the development of communicative and linguistic skills in sociocultural interaction in Russian universities. In the process of internationalization of Russian education, Chinese students acquire not only professional but also sociocultural competencies.

Discussion

Thanks to the study, it is essential to fix that there are sociocultural differences in the cultural environment of the host society. Difficulties in the interaction of Chinese students in mixed groups depends on how much they are fluent in information about the new cultural environment, how well they understand a foreign (Russian) language, behave appropriately in situations of communication and interaction with representatives of a new culture. A comparative analysis of the cultural characteristics of Russia and China makes it possible to single out the difficulties of sociocultural interaction in the new (international) cultural environment of Russian universities: insufficient knowledge of the socially normative and ethical principles of the new social and cultural environment [8]; inconsistency in some cultural values (the prevalence of national traditions regarding family, friendship, love and other practices); problems of understanding and ambiguity of decoding of Russian speech. In the field of educational interaction, they are faced with differences in teaching methods in universities in Russia and China; lack of awareness of the requirements of Russian universities [8].

An essential aspect of successful sociocultural interaction is the practice of everyday communication and the intensity of contacts between students from China and Russia. Outside the educational space, situations arise that are generated by stereotypes and expectations, for example, Russian students expect that Chinese students should know the history and culture of Russia if they decide to study at a Russian university. Among the majority of Russian students surveyed who study in mixed groups, together with Chinese students, concern was revealed that Chinese students do not understand Russian proverbs and sayings, are not familiar with the history, cultural traditions of Russia, the style of behaviour of carriers of Russian culture. There are two large groups of Chinese students – those who studied Russian before entering a university in China – one group and another group in Russia. Those who have not studied Russian in Russia are faced with difficulties communicating with Russian students and teachers, which leads to their social isolation. They have much less practice of everyday interpersonal communication in Russian. It is more difficult for them to decipher information encoded in non-verbal communication signals; they more strongly feel the difference in value orientations with Russian students. Many Russian students note that two-thirds of Chinese graduate students do not reach the level of development of Russian culture and the language necessary for the development of a bicultural personality [13]. This circumstance may be an obstacle to building a subsequent successful career in an international company.

A comparative analysis conducted in the study showed that the problems of interaction between students from Russia and China are the difficulties of adaptation, which are associated, firstly, with the development of norms and values, behaviours, other cultural

components of the international environment (the predominance of the host culture); secondly, with an acquaintance and subsequent inclusion in other organizational conditions of universities.

The adaptation of international students at the university includes universal stages inherent in any intercultural interaction: the experience of autonomy, assimilation and integration, each of which reflects the degree of awareness and assimilation of the sociocultural values of the new community, which allows it corresponding to the parameters of another sociocultural environment [8].

Sociocultural interaction of students is determined, on the one hand, by cultural interaction, and on the other, by a combination of socio-psychological factors of interaction: the intensity of interaction, the number of international students, official university policy, and much more. In practice, according to A.V. Kravtsova, there are “various types of relationships between groups of students and the mutual influence of the cultures that they represent. Some groups of foreign students completely lose their cultural uniqueness, others, on the contrary, retain their cultural identity and even spread their cultural characteristics among the representatives of the dominant culture of the university in which they study” [21].

For the successful sociocultural interaction of international students in Russian universities, it is essential to increase communication skills. Each participant in intercultural interaction has its unique social attitudes, value orientations, aesthetic feelings, communicative manifestations associated with ethnic and national identity, as well as their perception of the other side of the interaction. Also, representatives of the Chinese side have their stereotypical ideas about Russian youth. Moreover, these stereotypes on both sides of the interaction may not always be positive, objectively reflect reality, which may complicate the establishment of contacts and effective interaction between representatives of the two cultures. Thus, the study of differences in social stereotypes, ideas and value orientations of Russian and Chinese students allows identifying problems in sociocultural interaction.

Conclusion

The results practical significance lies in the fact that the identified problems of the sociocultural interaction of Chinese and Russian students allow developing technologies for optimizing the sociocultural interaction of international students in Russian universities, which is especially crucial at the initial stages of their education process in Russia. Among the recommendations for optimizing the Chinese students entering Russian universities, there are classes in the Russian language, joint Russian-Chinese activities for organizing leisure and recreation, joint public student associations (volunteering, tourism, music), excursion programs aimed at acquaintance with the culture of the host country, the Russian and Chinese students' mutual interaction in social networks and instant messengers.

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